

# Broadband for Seniors

## Finding and keeping volunteers



## Volunteers are vital

Volunteers in the Broadband for Seniors initiative offer their time and energy to senior Australians by providing face-to-face training in computers and the Internet.

Without the support of Volunteer Tutors, the Broadband for Seniors kiosks would not function as effectively.

Broadband for Seniors Volunteer Tutors need computer and Internet skills, time and a willingness to help others. Broadband for Seniors volunteers are extremely valuable. Their contribution to the success of the Broadband for Seniors initiative should be acknowledged and recognised.

**Volunteers are the force behind every successful Broadband for Seniors kiosk.**

This resource will focus on the following areas of volunteer management:

1. **Developing** your BFS volunteer team
2. **Maintaining** your BFS volunteer team
3. **Recognising** your BFS volunteer team

### At a glance ...

- Tip 1** Acknowledge, recognise and praise the efforts of your Volunteer Tutors.
- Tip 2** Consider having both regular and casual volunteers.
- Tip 3** Check out some of the online registers such as Go Volunteer – [www.govolunteer.com.au](http://www.govolunteer.com.au)
- Tip 4** Always be on the lookout for opportunities!
- Tip 5** Advertise your volunteer vacancies in the local paper. This service is often free.

**‘Volunteers are not a cheap fix. They are important and need to know that they are valued.’**

## Developing your team

Volunteers are always in demand. Your Broadband for Seniors Volunteer Tutors may come and go. When developing your volunteer team, try to ensure you have two lists:

- A **large** list of volunteers who contribute on a needs basis.
- A **small** list of volunteers that provide a regular commitment.

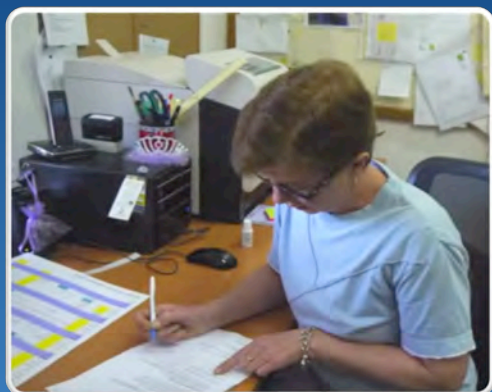
There's no easy way around it. Sometimes, finding volunteers can be difficult; particularly if you do not have any experience in this area.

### Finding people with the right skills

- **Chat with your current volunteers.** They are your greatest resource as they may have friends or family members who would be interested in being part of this rewarding work.
- **Find your closest volunteer centre.** A list can be found on the Volunteering Australia website: [volunteeringaustralia.org](http://volunteeringaustralia.org)
- **Register your BFS volunteer vacancies** on any or all of the free online volunteering websites. Check out the Go Volunteer website: [govolunteer.com.au](http://govolunteer.com.au)
- **Contact your local council.** They may have a volunteer program.
- **Talk to a journalist** at your local paper. They may be interested in a story about the services you are providing to senior Australians.
- **Advertise** your volunteer vacancies in your local paper.



*'It's a good idea to network with other community groups and leaders in your local area. You may be able to share resources.'*



Lynne Davies – Finbar Neighbourhood House

## Finbar BFS Kiosk

*'We generally find volunteers through our house brochures. Also people who use the house recommend others to come to the house, not just for activities but to offer their services. We also use our website and our Facebook page to find volunteers when we need them.'*

*'We don't have too much trouble keeping our volunteers. They seem happy to be here with us. We recognise their efforts every year with a special morning tea, where they are awarded certificates. This recognition by the committee of management also gives them the opportunity to seek out other opportunities arising in the house.'*

# Maintaining your team



Broadband for Seniors kiosks with a volunteer workforce have responsibilities. Kiosk hosts should be fully aware of these responsibilities.

Volunteering SA/NT has outlined some of these responsibilities below.

- Provide a clear **outline** of duties.
- Provide **insurance** cover for volunteers.
- Provide **orientation** and **training**.
- **Recognise** volunteers for their hours and years of service.
- Set clear lines of **communication** about complaints and conflict-resolution procedures.
- Provide **safe**, healthy working conditions.
- **Include** volunteers in relevant decision-making processes.
- Provide supervision and **support**.
- Provide **emergency** procedures guidelines.
- Provide required **documentation** relating to the volunteer work to be undertaken.
- Ensure volunteers undergo police checks or working with vulnerable people checks.

‘Set clear lines of communication about complaints and conflict resolution procedures.’

## COMMUNICATION

- Ask your volunteers if they are happy.
- Gather feedback from your volunteers; for example, by surveying or having a regular chat.
- Use the feedback gathered from your volunteers to improve the services your kiosk offers.

## ADMINISTRATION

- Make sure your volunteers are not overloaded with work.
- Check your volunteers are maintaining a healthy work-life balance.
- Have all the necessary paperwork in order.

## COORDINATION

- Guide your volunteers.
- Be available to respond to any queries or concerns.
- Establish a good working relationship with your volunteers.

Hints

Hints

## Recognising your team



Volunteers are more likely to stay with your Broadband for Seniors kiosk if they feel their efforts are recognised.

Most people, including volunteers, appreciate having their efforts recognised and valued. There are some simple ways to do this.

Here are just a few:

- Keep your volunteers **informed**.
- Offer **professional development** and training to your volunteers.
- Include your volunteers in **planning** activities.
- **Recognise** your volunteers' efforts publicly; for example, a Volunteer of the Month Award.
- Keep your volunteers **safe**.
- Offer to be a **referee** for your volunteers if asked.
- Enable your volunteers to **grow** on-the-job.
- Present awards for **years of service**.
- Where appropriate, offer additional **responsibility**.
- **Make time** for your volunteers.
- Accommodate your volunteers' **needs**.

‘Sometimes just a simple smile and a “hello” can make all the difference. Never underestimate how important it is to make your volunteers feel welcome.’

## A volunteer's perspective



Keith Harvey – Volunteer Tutor  
Woodrising Neighbourhood Centre

‘It's a poor day delivering training when you don't learn something new!’

‘My name is Keith Harvey and I'm a BFS tutor at Woodrising Neighbourhood Centre. There are now several tutors at the Centre and we are able to run full training on two days a week. We aim for one tutor to two seniors. The Centre has been tremendously supportive of our work.’

‘We find that once a senior has the basics under their belt then quite a few are keen to tackle other more advanced IT courses. We have a basic competency list that we work through with the seniors. It's also a good prompt sheet for them to ask questions.’

‘Some seniors get through the basics pretty quickly, mostly if they already have some existing computer skills, so we then handle whatever they want to learn.’

‘A couple of the students who have completed, or are doing, a more advanced course have been convinced to try volunteering as BFS tutors. After initial trepidation by some, they have found that this not only widens their training and communication skills, but as any trainer will tell you, it’s a poor day delivering training when you don’t learn something new! In addition, the seniors are very appreciative to them for the help.’

‘Some seniors have had younger relatives try to ‘teach’ them with ‘click here, click there’ type instruction and this left them very confused, discouraged and even more fearful of the computer and Internet. Seniors need to do things themselves and, importantly, proceed at their pace. They need to be told they are on a steep learning curve.’

‘I use the analogy of when they first tried to master the clutch, accelerator and gear changing in a car as they can all relate to those moments. That long ago skill required close personal tuition, actually doing it, making mistakes and learning from it, being encouraged and then having that ‘light bulb moment’ when it all clicked.’

‘Our volunteer tutors stay because they can see they are both contributing and getting something from it. If a senior misses a booking then it’s an opportunity to provide some training to the new tutor, or discuss issues about whatever they want to learn themselves. We never let a chance go by.’

## Web resources

### **BFS Wiki: Volunteering**

Website: [bfsv.wikispaces.com/Volunteering](http://bfsv.wikispaces.com/Volunteering)

### **Volunteering Australia**

Website: [volunteeringaustralia.org](http://volunteeringaustralia.org)

### **Volunteering SA/NT**

Website: [volunteeringsa.org.au](http://volunteeringsa.org.au)

### **Go Volunteer**

Website: [govolunteer.com.au](http://govolunteer.com.au)

### **The Centre for Volunteering**

Website: [volunteering.com.au](http://volunteering.com.au)

### **Volunteering Queensland**

Website: [volunteeringqld.org.au](http://volunteeringqld.org.au)

## BFS Networkers

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